

Harford County Commission on Disabilities

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Meeting Minutes June 25, 2007

Attendance:

Members Present:	Members Absent:	Associate Members Present:
Amy Axel	Susan Austin	Mary Adkins
Niki Biggs	Angela Barnett	Kevin Racine
Debbie Braam	Bob Coen	
Gil Kennedy	Helene Dubay	
Laurie Kwiedorowicz	Councilman Guthrie	
	Kathy Halliday	
	Andre Sconion	
	Marc Weinstein	

- I. Acting Chairperson, Debbie Braam, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
- II. Minutes: The minutes of the May 21, 2007 meeting were approved as presented.
- III. Committee Reports:
 - A. Executive Committee:
 1. Membership: Debbie Braam made the report for Membership committee Co-Chairs Kathy Halliday and Marc Weinstein who are both on vacation:
 - a. Bob Coen and Debbie Braam's reappointments to the Commission were approved by the County Executive. They will serve three year terms.
 - b. Andre Sconion's appointment as student representative to the Commission was approved by the County Executive and the County Council. Andre will serve the remainder



of the 2006/2007 school year and the upcoming 2007/2008 school year. Andre has started a summer job and is unable to attend this meeting.

- c. Helene Dubay's appointment as "County citizen who owns or operates a local business or who is an employee of a local business" was also approved. Helene will serve an initial two year term. Helene is on vacation and unable to attend this meeting.
- d. The appointment of Debbie Braam as Chairperson and Gil Kennedy as Vice Chairperson was on the County Council's agenda for June 12, 2007.
- e. The Membership Committee has received eight applications to fill vacancies in the category of "County Citizen with a Disability".

B. Accessibility Committee:

- 1. Ramps for Renters and Homeowners Program: A ramp for a senior citizen who uses a power wheel chair and lives in Aberdeen is in the final stages of construction. Rebuilding Together, Inc., the Commission's partner in the project, reports that a third ramp is under contract awaiting a permit. More to follow.
- 2. Housing Coalition: Gil Kennedy reported that the Coalition will meet on July 17, 2007 with consultant, David Kramer, and Community Development Coordinator, Steve Overbay, of the Department of Community Services, to develop the Coalition's definition of affordable housing and begin work on a strategic plan. Gil also reported that he and Sharon Grzanka visited Shrewsbury Courtyards, an affordable housing development in Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania, for individuals 55 years of age and over. The project was a cooperative effort between Penn-Mar Organization, Inc., a service provider for individuals with disabilities, and Springwood Real Estate Services, an affordable housing developer. The project was of interest because of the partnership between the developer and Penn-Mar; however, at this point, no individuals with disabilities supported by Penn-Mar are living at the development.

3. Design for Life – Harford: Sharon Grzanka distributed a copy of a press release announcing the establishment of a workgroup and facilitator to review and revise the current Harford County Zoning Code. The Departments of Inspections, Licenses and Permits and Community Services will request a change to the code, on behalf of the Commission on Disabilities, making accessibility modifications to residential housing “by right” rather than through a request for variance. This change is a key component of the proposed Design for Life program.
- C. Education Committee: Debbie Braam reported that:
1. The Expo for Transitioning Students will be held on March 8, 2008 and that the planning committee met on June 13, 2007.
 2. The planning committee is updating the exhibitor list and will be sending a “Save the Date” postcard to potential exhibitors. The Department of Community Services will update the Expo logo to match the expanded audience: high school students with disabilities on both certificate and diploma tracks.
 3. The committee is also working to identify approximately six workshops and speakers for the Expo. More to follow.
 4. Next meeting of the committee will be held on Wednesday, July 18, 2007, at 1:00 p.m., at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School”.
- D. Government and Community Relations Committee
1. Commission web page: Sharon Grzanka reported for Bob Coen, who was unable to attend the meeting. Two meetings, July 9 and August 8, 2007, have been scheduled to begin work on updating the Commission’s webpage. Commissioners are asked to forward any input and suggestions to Bob at r.l.coen@worldnet.att.net or to Sharon at disability@harfordcountymd.gov.
 2. Legislative Committee: Laurie Kwiedorowicz distributed and discussed the final outcome of legislation proposed during the 2007 Maryland General Assembly session. Gil Kennedy commented on the anticipated special session of the Maryland Legislature to address the impending

budget shortfall and offered to provide updates on disability-related budget issues that he is provided in his role as President of the Board of Directors of the Arc of Baltimore.

3. Maryland Alliance of Local Commissions and Committees on Disabilities. Amy Axel reported that Secretary Cathy Raggio, of the Maryland Department of Disabilities attended the June 4, 2007 meeting of the Alliance. Secretary Raggio spoke about the very limited response to the new Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) program and stated that the Department was committed to outreach to individuals with disabilities who may benefit from the program.
4. Maryland Youth Leadership Forum: The three Harford County student delegates, Ashley Bolgiano, Lauren Kennedy, and Andre Sconion, and their parents were invited to a "Send Off" at the July 23, 2007 Commission meeting. The County Executive was expected to attend. Due to work and vacation schedules, none of the students are able to attend. The members discussed hosting a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the annual report for the County Executive in lieu of the "Send Off", but decided that attendance at the July meeting might be limited due to commission member vacations. As a result, the group decided to reschedule the "Send-Off" to a "Welcome Back" for the students, their parents, and the County Executive. All will be invited to attend the meeting on Monday, August 27, 2007 for an update on their experiences at the forum.
5. Transportation Steering Committee: Kevin Racine reported on regional transit issues. Sharon Grzanka reported that due to the success of travel training, provided by Mobility Trainer, Cheryl Gable, a "Train the Trainer" curriculum will be developed to be presented to service providers and community groups. This will expand travel training services to the general public.
6. Harford County Town Hall Meeting: The event is planned for Monday, December 4, 2007, 6:00-8:30 p.m. The next planning meeting will be held on Thursday, June 28, 2007

at 1:00 p.m. at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School” in Bel Air.

- E. Employment Committee: Co-chair Niki Biggs reported that:
 - 1. The Annual Awards Luncheon will be held on Thursday, October 18, 2007, at noon at the Maryland Golf and Country Club. She distributed application forms for the six awards presented at the Awards Luncheon. The applications are also available at the Commission’s web page at www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/disabilities. The Committee is seeking a keynote speaker for the luncheon. Amy Axel suggested that Secretary Raggio would be an excellent speaker given her particular interest in the success of the EID program. Debbie Braam asked whether the committee had contacted Harford Cable Network about taping the event. Both suggestions will be explored by the committee.
 - 2. In the interest of increasing awareness about the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) program, the committee has scheduled a presentation on the program by Becca Smith of Making Choices for Independent Living (MCIL) for Service Coordinators in Harford County on September 11, 2007. The EID offers individuals with disabilities who are receiving disability benefits the opportunity to return to work while purchasing Medical Assistance at an affordable rate. The committee hopes to schedule additional EID information sessions to continue outreach to the community.
- IV. Disabilities Coordinator Report: Harford County will hold a Mass Care Sheltering Exercise on Wednesday, July 25, 2007, from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Several of the volunteers with disabilities who participated in last July’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Exercise will be participating again this summer. Commissioners are invited to participate in order to provide input on how well the needs of persons with disabilities are met. Contact Sharon Grzanka for more information.
- V. Old Business: See committee reports.
- VI. New Business:

- A. 17th Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Debbie Braam distributed flyers announcing the Department of Disabilities statewide celebration of the 17th Anniversary of the ADA, on July 26, 2007 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the Lyric Opera House in Baltimore. RSVP is required. Contact the Department of Disabilities at 800-637-4113 voice/TTY or email mdod@mdod.state.md.us.
 - B. Amy Axel proposed a Commission sponsored/co-sponsored Harford County reception for Secretary Raggio. Amy Axel and Kathy Halliday will work on the proposed project after contacting Secretary Raggio's office regarding a date on her calendar.
- VII. Public Comment and Announcements: There were none.
- VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

[These minutes are available in alternative format upon request.](#)